

CLAIMS

1. A walk-behind lawn mower comprising:
an engine for driving at least one cutting blade; and
a latch assembly for receiving part of a sulky attached to the mower,
wherein the latch assembly includes a pivotal spring-biased latch having a recess defined therein, wherein the recess of the latch is adapted to receive a protruding member of a sulky when a sulky is folded up from a deployed position to a stowed position so that the latch assembly of the mower can hold the folded up sulky in the stowed position.
2. The mower of claim 1, further comprising a release member operatively coupled to the latch assembly, wherein the release member extends upwardly from the latch assembly through a dashboard of the mower so that when an operator actuates the release member the latch assembly releases the sulky from the stowed position so that the sulky drops to the ground.
3. The mower of claim 2, wherein the release member comprises an elongated rod including a curved top end, and when an operator pulls the rod upwardly this causes the latch assembly to release the sulky from the stowed position so that the sulky drops to the ground.
4. The mower of claim 1, wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from a normally vertical pivot axis of the sulky so as to define an angle θ of from about 30 to 70 degrees with the vertical pivot axis of the sulky.
5. The mower of claim 1, wherein the latch assembly is located under a dashboard of the mower.

6. The mower of claim 1, further comprising a buttress plate located laterally forward of the latch, so that a leading portion of the sulky is adapted to hit the buttress plate when the sulky is moved into the stowed position with excessive force.

7. A walk-behind mower comprising:
first and second rear drive wheels selectively drivable in opposite directions so as to allow zero radius turns to be performed when the first and second rear drive wheels are driven in opposite directions at approximately the same speed at the same time;

first and second hydraulic pumps for controlling the first and second drive wheels, respectively;

first and second elongated control rods operatively coupled between a handle control assembly and the first and second pumps, respectively;

wherein first and second actuator shafts of the first and second pumps, respectively, both located on inboard sides of the first and second pumps so that the first and second actuator shafts face one another.

8. The mower of claim 7, wherein the first and second control rods are each at least partially located inboard of the first and second pumps as viewed from a rear of the mower.

9. A power lawn mower comprising:
first and second drive wheels selectively drivable in opposite directions via first and second respective hydraulic pumps, wherein the hydraulic pumps control the driving speed and direction of the first and second drive wheels;

a pump lock-out system for selectively locking the first and second pumps in a neutral state, wherein the pump lock-out system is engaged along with a braking force to at least one wheel; and

wherein the pump lock-out system includes an engaging member that selectively engages each of first and second pump control levers for the first and second

pumps, respectively, so that when the engaging member engages both the first and second pump control levers the first and second pumps are locked in a neutral state.

10. The mower of claim 9, where the first and second pumps are locked in the neutral state during application of the braking force.

11. The mower of claim 9, wherein, when the braking force is released the engaging member disengages from the first and second pump control levers thereby unlocking the first and second pumps from the neutral state.

12. A power lawn mower comprising:

- first and second drive wheels selectively drivable in opposite directions via first and second respective hydraulic pumps, wherein the hydraulic pumps control the driving speed and direction of the first and second drive wheels;
- a handle control assembly for allowing an operator to cause each of the first and second drive wheels to be independently controlled for operation in both forward and reverse directions, wherein the handle control assembly includes:
 - a right hand forward control lever for controlling the first pump and the first drive wheel, a right hand reverse control lever for controlling the first pump and the first drive wheel, a left hand forward control lever for controlling the second pump and the second drive wheel, and a left hand reverse control lever for controlling the second pump and the second drive wheel;
 - wherein the right hand forward control lever pivots about a first axis and the left hand forward control lever pivots about a second axis, wherein the first and second axes are not parallel to one another;
 - a rigid handle member located between at least the right hand forward control lever and the right hand reverse control lever as viewed from above;
 - wherein the right hand reverse control lever is of a length substantially less than a length of the right hand forward control lever so as to provide a gap on a forward side of the rigid handle member as viewed from above that allows an

operator to rotate his or her hand around the rigid handle member without interference from the right hand reverse control lever.

13. The mower of claim 12, wherein the right hand forward control lever and the right hand reverse control lever are fixed to one another so as to pivot together about a common axis.

14. The mower of claim 12, wherein the right hand forward control lever and the right hand reverse control lever are fixed to one another so as to pivot together about a first common axis, and the left hand forward control lever and the left hand reverse control lever are fixed to one another so as to pivot together about a second common axis that is not parallel to the first common axis.

15. The mower of claim 12, wherein the right hand reverse control lever is of a length no greater than 75% of a length of the right hand forward control lever, so that the right hand reverse control lever is shorter than the right hand forward control lever.

16. The mower of claim 15, wherein the right hand reverse control lever is of a length no greater than 65% of a length of the right hand forward control lever.

17. The mower of claim 12, wherein the gap is defined between an end of the rigid handle member and an end of the right hand reverse control lever, and wherein the gap is at least 3 inches wide.